

Temperature reaches new highs as heatwaves scorch the globe

July 17 2023, by Gael BRANCHEREAU



Sweltering weather is expected to continue in Italy and other parts of Europe over the next few days.

Temperatures reached new highs on Monday as heatwaves scorched parts of the Northern Hemisphere, triggering health warnings and

fanning wildfires in the latest stark reminder of the effects of global warming.

From North America to Europe and Asia, people gulped water and sought shelter from the sweltering heat, with the mercury expected to reach new highs in several places in the next few days.

Europe, the globe's fastest-warming continent, was bracing for its hottest-ever temperature this week on Italy's islands of Sicily and Sardinia, where a high of 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit) is predicted, according to the European Space Agency.

"We're from Texas and it's really hot there, we thought we would escape the heat but it's even hotter here," Colman Peavy, 30, said as he sipped a capuccino at an outside terrasse in central Rome with his wife Ana at the start of a two-week Italian vacation.

With June already having been the world's hottest on record, according to the EU weather monitoring service, Mother Nature seemed intent on July not falling far behind.

China reported a new high for mid-July in the northwest of the country, where temperature reached 52.2C in the Xinjiang region's village of Sanbao, breaking the previous high of 50.6C set six years ago.

In nearby Turpan city, where ground surface temperatures sizzled at 80C in some parts, authorities have told workers and students to stay home and ordered special vehicles to spray water on major thoroughfares, the meteorological body said.

In Cyprus, where temperatures are expected to remain above 40C through Thursday, a 90-year-old man died as a result of heatstroke and three other seniors were hospitalized, health officials said.

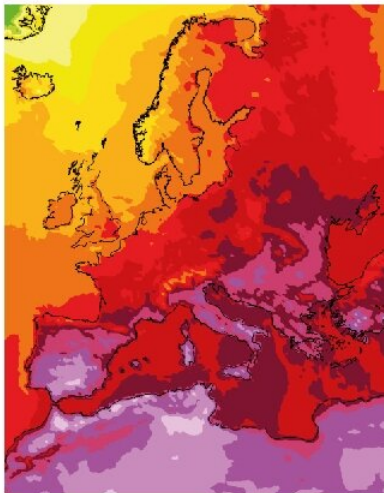
In Japan, heatstroke alerts were issued in 32 out of the country's 47 prefectures, mainly in central and southwestern regions.

Heatwave in Europe and around the Mediterranean

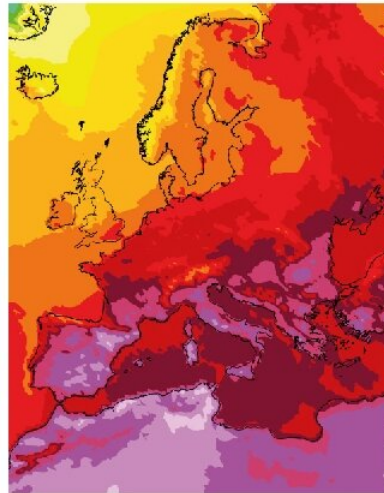
Temperature forecasts at 2 metres above the surface, 1500 GMT, in °C



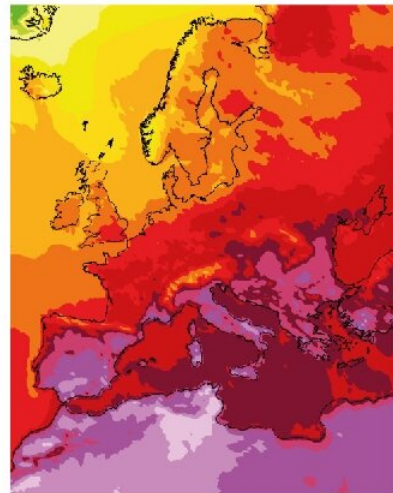
Monday, July 17



Tuesday, July 18



Wednesday, July 19



Source: ECMWF (forecast as of July 17, 0000 GMT)



Temperature forecasts for Europe and the Mediterranean at 2 m above the surface, according to the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), data as of July 17, 2023, 0000 GMT.

At least 60 people in Japan were treated for heatstroke, local media reported, including 51 who were taken to hospital in Tokyo.

The heat was enough for at least one man to dispense with social mortification in Hamamatsu city.

"It's honestly unbearable without a parasol, although I have to admit it is a bit embarrassing," he told national broadcaster NHK of the umbrella in his hand.

'Oppressive' US heat

In western and southern states in the US, which are used to high temperatures, more than 80 million people were under advisories as a "widespread and oppressive" heatwave roasted the region.

California's Death Valley, often among the hottest places on Earth, reached a near-record 52C Sunday afternoon.

In Arizona, the state capital Phoenix recorded its 17th straight day above 109 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius), as temperatures hit 113F (45C) on Sunday afternoon.

"We're used to 110, 112 (degrees Fahrenheit) ... But not the streaks," Nancy Leonard, a 64-year-old retiree from the nearby suburb of Peoria, told AFP. "You just have to adapt".

Southern California was fighting numerous wildfires, including one in Riverside County that has burned more than 7,500 acres (3,000 hectares) and prompted evacuation orders.

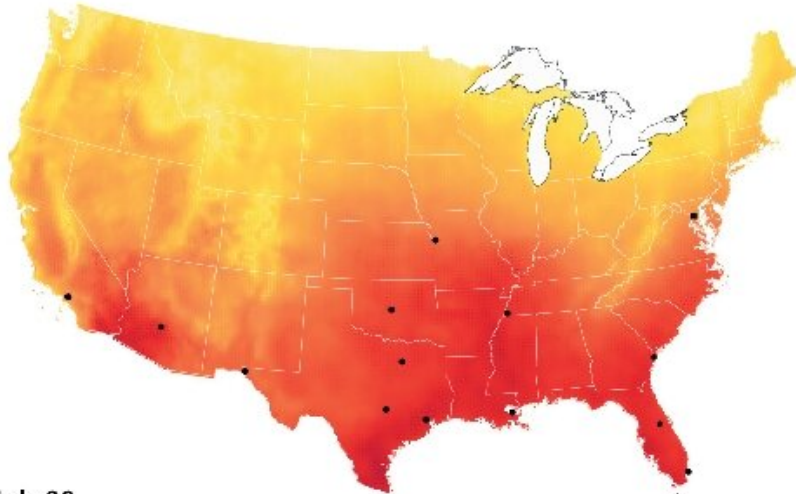
Extended heatwave in US West and South

Forecasted daily maximum heat index*, in °C

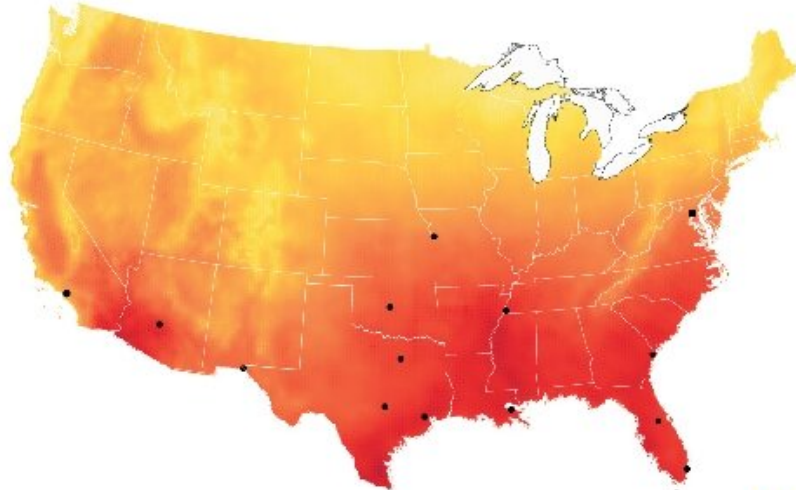
July 18 20 48+



July 19



July 20



Source: NOAA *combines air temperature and humidity

Maps showing forecasted daily maximum heat index for the US from July 18-20.

Historic highs forecast

In Europe, Italians were warned to prepare for "the most intense heatwave of the summer and also one of the most intense of all time," with the health ministry sounding a red alert for 16 cities including Rome, Bologna and Florence.

Temperatures were due to hit 42C-43C in Rome on Tuesday, smashing the record of 40.5C set in August 2007.

Nevertheless, visitors thronged to tourist hot spots like the Colosseum and the Vatican.

"I'm from South Africa. We're used to this heat," said Jacob Vreunissen, 60, a civil engineer from Cape Town. "You have to drink lots of water, obviously wear your hat and that's about it."

Greece saw a respite on Monday, as temperatures eased a bit and the Acropolis in Athens resumed its regular opening hours after shutting for a few hours during the previous three days.

But a new heatwave was expected from Thursday and authorities on Monday ordered several seaside resorts evacuated as a precaution after a wildfire broke out in Kouvaras, 50 kilometers (31 miles) east of Athens.

"It's a difficult fire, the winds are really strong," said firefighters spokesman Yannis Artopios as seven water planes, four helicopters and

150 firefighters battled the blaze.

In Romania, temperatures are expected to reach 39C on Monday across most of the country.

Little reprieve is forecast for Spain, where meteorologists warned that "abnormally high" temperatures on Monday, including up to 44C in the southern Andalusia region in what would be a new regional record.

First aid for heatstroke

CALL EMERGENCY Seek emergency help if the person shows heatstroke symptoms

Elevate the feet

Apply ice packs in armpits, back of the neck and groin area, or use cooling blankets

Cool the body by sponging or spraying water

Watch for signs of progressive heatstroke like unconsciousness or difficulty in breathing*

IMMEDIATE REMEDIES

- SHADE**: Move the person into a cool place, without direct sunlight
- WATER**: If the person is awake or alert, give fluids for hydration
- MINIMUM CLOTHING**: Remove unnecessary clothing
- COOL AIR**: Fan the person to help lower the body's temperature

* May require cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administered by a trained person

Sources: HealthLink BC, MyHealthAlberta, MayoClinic, StJohnAmbulance

AFP

First aid for heatstroke.

Killer rains

Along with the heat, parts of Asia have also been battered by torrential rain.

South Korea's president vowed Monday to "completely overhaul" the country's approach to extreme weather, after at least 40 people were killed in recent flooding and landslides during monsoon rains, which are forecast to continue through Wednesday.

In northern India, relentless monsoon rains have reportedly killed at least 90 people, following burning heat.

Major flooding and landslides are common during India's monsoons, but experts say climate change is increasing their frequency and severity.

It can be difficult to attribute a particular weather event to climate change, but many scientists insist that global warming is behind the intensification of heatwaves.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: Temperature reaches new highs as heatwaves scorch the globe (2023, July 17) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-07-heatwave-threatens-temperatures.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.